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FOLK REMEDIES. — In a pension claim a witness fixed the date of claimant's disability as follows: "About the 10th January, 1865, he was at my house to get some *first shots* to rub on his knees for rheumatism." As I could find no one who could explain this, I wrote to the witness, receiving this reply: "The first shots is the first run made when stilling, or the first whiskey that is run off when starting." My correspondent says further that there are several persons there (Independence, Mo.), who use this remedy for rheumatism.

The daughter of a physician here was persuaded, while on a visit to Bristol, Tenn., to tie a mole's foot to a string which was hung about her baby's neck while teething. Though laughing at the absurdity, she said that the child never kept her awake a single night.

Another lady here prevented her children's taking the whooping-cough by tying around their necks a "green leather string with nine knots in it." Green, I suppose, refers to the condition, not the color, of the leather.

In this last case I presume the magic lies in the number of the knots rather than the material of the string. But the efficacy of the mole's foot, I imagine, is found in the old doctrine of signatures. Like the incipient tooth, the foot burrows about in the dark.

H. E. Warner.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

ALL-FOOLS' DAY IN ITALY. — Mrs. Eustace B. Rogers (*née* Anna North Alexander), writes from Florence, under the date of March 9, 1891, a lively description of a custom evidently allied to All-Fools' Day usages: —

"Last week I noticed groups of giggling, mischievous-looking boys gathered in unusual numbers all over the city; and as a friend and I passed a large group, one little lad sneaked up quietly and pinned onto her dress a slip of bright blue paper cut in a singular fashion, and when we discovered it men, women, and children within a block shouted with glee. It at once occurred to me that this must be the Italian All-Fools' Day, and on inquiry I ascertained that the custom in Florence dates back hundreds of years. The day was *Mezza Quaresima*, in French *Mi-Carême*, or Mid-Lent, which fell this year on March 5th. The pinning on to passers-by of papers cut into rudely shaped ladders is all that remains of the ancient and elaborate celebration of *Mezza Quaresima*. Formerly, on the first day of Lent, a large puppet of an old, hideous woman was hung up in the Piazza Signoria high in air. This represented Lent, a period thoroughly hated by the people, as in those days it meant no music, no flowers, no bright colors in dress, no recreation, but only rigorous fasting and a condition of things that was thought miserable by the light-hearted, fun-loving Italians. To celebrate the happy arrival of Mid-Lent, great crowds assembled in the Piazza, and a long ladder was placed so that a person could reach the puppet, which was then ceremoniously cut in half, amidst the shouts and cheers of the multitude below eagerly watching. The upper half of Signora Lent dangled ignominiously in mid-air until Easter ended the reign of ashes and sackcloth. The little bits of paper, cut into the shape of ladders, are all that now remains of this curious custom. It is suggested that our English